

## CUMNER'S SON

Blake Shorland said to him, gently: "How do you feel about it all?"

As if in gentle protest, the head moved slightly. "All's well, all's well," the low voice said.

A noise, in which the cries of the wounded came through the smoke, and then the dying man, feeling the approach of another convulsion, said, "A cigarette, *mon ami*."

Blake Shorland put a cigarette between his lips and lighted it.

"And now a little wine," the fallen soldier added.

The surgeon, who had come again for a moment, nodded and said: "It may help."

Barré's native servant brought a bottle of champagne intended to be drunk after the expected victory, but not in this fashion!

Shorland understood. This brave young soldier of a dispossessed family wished to show no fear of pain, no lack of outward and physical courage in the approaching and final shock. He must do something that was conventional, natural, habitual, that would take his mind from the thing itself. At heart he was right. The rest was a question of living like a strong-nerved soldier to the last. The tobacco-smoke curled feebly from his lips, and was swallowed up in the clouds of powder-smoke that circled round them. With his head on his native servant's knee he watched Shorland uncork the bottle and pour the wine into the surgeon's medicine-glass. It was put in